

CHARLES TAYLOR MASTER MECHANIC'S AWARD

**Fairbanks Flight Standards District
Office Honoree 2000**

TOM Y. KUSHIDA



KUSHIDA, TOM Y. Tom was born November 30, 1929, in Auburn, California. He started working in the aviation industry in 1949, at Clarksburg, California for the Clarksburg Dusting Service. Tom worked at Clarksburg until June of 1949. During that time, Mr. Joe Burges taught Tom how to fly in a Stearman.

In June of 1949, Tom went to work at the McClellan AFB aircraft sheetmetal shop. Tom served in the U. S. Army as an aircraft mechanic in Korea working on fixed wing aircraft, L-19's, and L-20's, which is the military version of the Cessna 195's and the Twin Bonanza's. Tom served in the Army from 1951 to 1953.

Tom continued his aviation career by attending the airframe and engine mechanics school from 1953 to 1954 at the Northrop Institute of Technology in Inglewood, California. While there, he also worked as a mechanic at the Torrance Airport for Eagle Air until 1955. At Eagle Air he worked on J3 Cub's, Cessna 170's and Waco's. On May 28, 1955, he was certificated as an Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic.

In July of 1955, Tom packed up his 1955 Ford F-100 and drove the dusty Alcan Highway to Fairbanks, Alaska. Alaska has been his home ever since. Tom made it to Fairbanks in better shape than his vehicle. Upon his arrival Tom went to work for Wien Alaska Airlines. During that time, Tom performed maintenance on Cessna's, Dehavilland's, DC-3, DC-4, C-46, Noorduy-n-Norseman, Beech 18 and F27 aircraft. Tom was the maintenance supervisor during his shift.

In 1968, with a fellow Wien mechanic, he left Wien Airlines to start a maintenance facility which was named Northland Aviation, Inc. Tom and his partner operated this business on the East Ramp of the Fairbanks International Airport until 1986. Northland serviced the local area light aircraft market performing alterations, repairs and inspections. Northland also acquired several Supplemental Type Certificates for products they designed, built and marketed.

In October of 1975, Tom earned his private pilot certificate and now has Single Engine Land & Sea, and Multi-engine ratings. In 1981 Tom and his wife Marge were married and they have three children. Tom acquired his Inspection Authorization rating in May of 1986.

Tom left Northland in 1986 and moved to his current business location at Chena Marina Airport. There he started his aviation maintenance facility under the name TK Enterprises (TK for Tom Kushida). His partner at Northland Aviation moved to Oregon, so now Tom works mostly by himself with occasional help as necessary from another A&P. He is still performing alterations, such as the extended baggage compartment and door

assembly. He continues to do repairs, and performs inspections on light aircraft. Tom has rebuilt and restored many aircraft and does some home build work. One aircraft he repaired is a beautiful Bellanca for his wife with her initials in the registration number.

Tom is still working his trade full-time in the summer but has slowed the pace with a few months each winter now spent in Ajo, Arizona, where he and Marge go to relax and enjoy the milder weather.